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TAGS: [PREL](#) [SP](#) [VZ](#) [IZ](#) [BO](#)
SUBJECT: SPAIN'S DEPUTY FM ON IRAQ HOSPITAL DONATION,
VENEZUELA, ISRAEL, BOLIVIA

Classified By: Ambassador Eduardo Aguirre for reasons 1.4 (b) & (d).

[1](#)1. (C/NF) SUMMARY. Spain's Deputy Foreign Minister Leon confirmed to Ambassador Aguirre on July 18 that Spain will donate USD 22 million to the Basrah Children's Hospital and should have no problem delivering the funds by September 1. Leon reiterated that Spain will vote for Guatemala rather than Venezuela for the UNSC seat. He and the Ambassador briefly discussed the sale of Spanish-made defense items to Venezuela (septel). Leon noted that the GOS has publicly denounced Hizbullah's irresponsible provocation of Israel, but also called on Israel to avoid attacks against civilians and infrastructure. Leon told the Ambassador that he has offered Bolivian ex-President Rodriguez the opportunity to come to Spain if he needs a place to go. END SUMMARY.

-- BASRAH CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL --

[1](#)2. (C/NF) In a July 18 meeting, the Ambassador thanked Deputy Foreign Minister Bernadino Leon for MFA's quick follow-up on Foreign Minister Moratinos' pledge to Secretary Rice to contribute to humanitarian projects in Iraq. The Ambassador noted that the First Lady and Secretary Rice have taken a particular interest in the Basrah Children's Hospital project. Leon said that Spain is pleased to be able to contribute to the hospital, particularly considering the child survival problems in the region. He said that he would talk to the Spanish cooperation agency AECI and didn't foresee any problem delivering Spain's USD 22 million donation by September 1. Leon asked the Ambassador to alert MFA if more funds were to be needed for the project.

-- ISRAEL/LEBANON --

[1](#)3. (C/NF) The Ambassador thanked Leon for the GOS's efforts to evacuate several Amcits from Lebanon along with Spanish evacuees and noted the Secretary's comments on the need to protect innocent civilians as Israel defends itself. He also told Leon that it was hard for the USG to understand President Zapatero's comments linking the current Lebanon/Israel situation with the war in Iraq. Leon said that Zapatero was speaking for internal political consumption only in order to address the opposition Popular Party's comments on the situation, and was not making a bilateral commentary directed at the US. Leon pointed out that he and the rest of the Zapatero government have been repeatedly outspoken in condemning Hizbollah's irresponsible provocation of Israel. However, Leon also said that Israel has been disproportionate in its response, noting both the poor optics and the bad strategy of attacking airports and infrastructure rather than focusing on Hizbollah targets, which would not have spurred complaints from the international community. Leon said that Spain understands that Syria and Iran provoked Israel, and that the Israeli response would have been

justified, but not at the scale and proportion of the current operation.

-- VENEZUELA --

¶4. (C/NF) The Ambassador encouraged Leon to take advantage of his and Vice President de la Vega's upcoming travel to South America to encourage votes for Guatemala for the UNSC seat. Leon said that the Venezuelan ambassador to Spain had recently lobbied him on the issue, but that Spain remains committed to voting for Guatemala. He said that Spain always tells other governments when asked that it will vote for Guatemala, and explains why Guatemala is a strong candidate. He shied away from the idea of advocating for Guatemala, saying that the situation is made worse if countries become polarized because of outside interference. Leon said that he does not believe that Venezuela will win the seat, even with Cuba's assistance. Leon and the Ambassador also touched on the sale of Spanish-made defense items to Venezuela (septel).

-- BOLIVIA --

¶5. (C/NF) Leon said that the GOS is well aware of the Bolivian government's unfair treatment of ex-President Rodriguez and is in close but discrete contact with Rodriguez. In response to the Ambassador's suggestion that Spain offer Rodriguez a refuge at the Club de Madrid (a Madrid-based think-tank style organization comprised of ex-Presidents throughout the world), Leon said that he had already told Rodriguez that Spain is ready to help him if he needs it. Leon also said that Prince Felipe had made a public show of support for Rodriguez on his last visit to Bolivia.
AGUIRRE